CONFERENCE ON DISARMAMENT

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FINAL RECORD OF THE SIX HUNDRED AND EIGHTH PLENARY MEETING

Held at the Palais des Nations, Geneva,
on Tuesday, 28 January 1992, at 10 a.m.

President: Mr. Naste Calovski (Yugoslavia)

GE.92-60180/8503a

The PRESIDENT: I declare open the 608th plenary meeting of the Conference on Disarmament.

As was the case last Thursday, no delegation has been inscribed to take the floor at this plenary meeting. However, following our practice, I wish to ask whether any member wishes to speak at this stage? I see none.

I had hoped today to be in a position to put before the Conference, for decision, the 38 requests from States not members of the Conference to participate in its work. This is what I understood from those delegations that were still consulting among themselves when I approached them last week. However, we are not in a position to take action today. The consultations among some members of delegations are still continuing. The 38 requests which were to be taken up today already reflect a record number of non-members interested in our work. We shall now have to wait for a decision, which I expect will be forthcoming this week. I urge those members who need more time to consult, to do so actively, so that we will not have to postpone a decision which we owe to those interested in joining us at an important stage of our work. Suffice it to say that all 38 requests refer to the negotiations on the draft convention banning all chemical weapons.

As we shall have time this morning to consult informally, I do hope that members will do so, not only on organizational and substantive questions before the Conference, but also on this important matter of participation by non-members in the work of the Conference.

I give the floor to the representative of the Russian Federation, Ambassador Batsanov.

Mr. BATSANOV (Russian Federation) (translated from Russian): Thank you, Mr. President. I am taking the liberty of making a brief remark on what happened at our last, and now our present, meeting. We have no speakers.

At one stage, we agreed that at certain periods of our work we would hold two meetings a week and, the rest of the time, one plenary meeting a week.

Well, if this practice, so to speak, continues - and indeed in any case - there is reason to revert to the question of how many plenary meetings we are to hold, perhaps by compressing the periods during which we planned to hold two plenary meetings a week.

Of course, I am not proposing settling this question now but I just wanted to flash a signal, so to speak.

The PRESIDENT: I thank Ambassador Batsanov for his statement and for his suggestions, which I also think are relevant, and we should take them into account in our future way of organizing ourselves and in our deliberations. I thank you.

(The President)

I now give the floor to the representative of Germany, Ambassador von Wagner.

Mr. VON WAGNER (Germany): Thank you, Mr. President.

Mr. President, the situation for those delegations which have in the past observed our deliberations and have had the opportunity to participate in, at least the Ad Hoc Committee on Chemical Weapons, is of course particularly unsatisfactory. In previous years, Mr. President, all ad hoc committees set up by the Conference needed a certain time to get started. Last year, if my recollection is correct, it took about three to four weeks until the Ad Hoc Committee on Chemical Weapons got started. This year we are happy to record that the Ad Hoc Committee on Chemical Weapons got started right away. There is the question of the admittance of observers, which is not delayed but takes more time and I accept that of course fully.

Nevertheless, the situation for the observers is, as I have said, very unsatisfactory. I have not very thoroughly consulted with the Secretariat so far whether there are ways and means of helping; I do not see any, I must confess. Nevertheless, I could promise those who are not yet observers but are participating in this public meeting today to see whether there are any ways and means, but my hope is not very great. I would wish to let them know that at least the Ad Hoc Committee Chairman deplores this delay, for which he is not responsible.

The PRESIDENT: I thank the representative of Germany for his statement. Does any other member wish to take the floor? I see none.

I have no other business today and I shall proceed to adjourn this plenary meeting.

The next plenary meeting of the Conference on Disarmament will be held on Thursday, 30 January, at 10 a.m. The plenary meeting stands adjourned.

The meeting rose at 10.30 a.m.